

PORTFOLIO OF RESEARCH IN WELFARE AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

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The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities.

ACF programs aim to:

- Empower families and individuals to increase their economic independence and productivity;
- Encourage strong, healthy, supportive communities that have a positive impact on quality of life and the development of children;
- Create partnerships with front-line service providers, states, localities, and tribal communities to identify and implement solutions that transcend traditional program boundaries;
- Improve access to services through planning, reform, and integration;
- Address the needs, strengths, and abilities of vulnerable populations including people with developmental disabilities, refugees, and migrants.

OFFICE OF PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION

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The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) studies ACF programs and the populations they serve through rigorous research and evaluation projects. These include evaluations of existing programs, evaluations of innovative approaches to helping low-income children and families, research syntheses, and descriptive and exploratory studies. OPRE also works to improve the analysis of data, coordinates performance management for ACF, and aims to build and disseminate knowledge about effective approaches to helping low-income children and families.

OPRE includes four divisions:

- The Division of Economic Independence focuses on welfare, employment, training, education, and family self-sufficiency.
- The Division of Child and Family Development focuses on early care and education, including subsidized child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, and child abuse and neglect.
- The Division of Family Strengthening focuses on teen pregnancy prevention, youth development, healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, family violence, runaway and homeless youth, and and early childhood home visiting.
- The Division of Data and Improvement focuses on improving the quality, usefulness, accessibility, and analysis of data to improve ACF programs and program participants' outcomes.



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WELFARE AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY RESEARCH

The Division of Economic Independence within OPRE has primary responsibility for welfare and family self-sufficiency research.

OPRE's research in the area of welfare and family self-sufficiency is designed to expand knowledge about effective programs to promote employment, self-sufficiency, and economic well-being among low-income families. Research focuses on five major areas:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Employment and the Labor Market
- Education and Training
- Behavioral Science
- Cross-Cutting and Other Safety Net Research

Within these areas, OPRE funds experimental impact evaluations, implementation evaluations, and descriptive research projects aimed at informing the design and implementation of programs.

OPRE also invests in activities to support evaluation technical assistance and disseminate rigorous research on welfare and family self-sufficiency topics.

This *Portfolio of Research in Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency* describes major welfare and family self-sufficiency research projects sponsored by OPRE in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

ACF Evaluation Policy

ACF seeks to promote rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics in the conduct of evaluations. ACF's Evaluation Policy, which was published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2014, addresses these five key principles to govern ACF's planning, conduct, and use of evaluation. The [full evaluation policy](#) is available on the OPRE website.

- **Rigor:** ACF is committed to using rigorous methods to yield accurate and unbiased findings.
- **Relevance:** Our evaluations should address legislative requirements and congressional, federal, state, tribal, and local interests.
- **Transparency:** We will make information about planned and ongoing evaluations easily accessible. We will release results regardless of the findings. Reports will present comprehensive results, including favorable, unfavorable, and null findings.
- **Independence:** Evaluation should not be biased. To promote objectivity, we protect independence in the design, conduct, and analysis of evaluations.
- **Ethics:** ACF-sponsored evaluations will be conducted in an ethical manner and safeguard the dignity, rights, safety, and privacy of participants.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) RESEARCH

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides block grants to states to design and operate programs to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. OPRE's research examines the local implementation of TANF programs and policies; the intersection of TANF with other safety net programs; and other relevant issues related to TANF program operations, TANF recipients, and TANF-eligible families.

Recent past projects include: [a study of the intersection between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance services](#); [an analysis of the coordination of TANF and Workforce Investment Act services](#); [a descriptive study of differences in TANF programs administered by counties versus states](#); and [an examination of situations in which TANF clients have zero reported hours of work participation](#).

Other past projects include: [a study of local implementation of TANF](#); [a descriptive study of Tribal TANF](#); [an examination of state and local efforts to divert TANF applicants from applying for cash assistance](#); [a study of what is known about the effects of time limit policies](#); [a series of research briefs synthesizing knowledge on important TANF topics](#); [an examination of the overlap between TANF and Supplemental Security Income programs and populations](#); and [a qualitative examination of the dynamics of disconnection from employment and TANF](#).

In addition to the studies described in this section, OPRE conducts experimental research on welfare-to-work and innovative employment strategies; these efforts are described in the later sections on Employment and the Labor Market and on Education and Training.

State TANF Policies Database

Under TANF, states have considerable authority to design the parameters of their programs and set their own rules. Since 1997, Urban Institute has maintained the State TANF Policies Database, also known as the Welfare Rules Database, in order to document state program rules. The database is meant to be a single location where information on TANF program rules can be researched across states and/or across years. ACF has funded updates to the database as well as publication of tables summarizing state TANF policies for each year since 1997. Annual publications are available on the [OPRE website](#).

Identifying Issues and Options to Understand TANF-Compatible Outcome Measures for Employment Services

OPRE launched Identifying Issues and Options to Understand TANF-Compatible Outcome Measures for Employment Services (OUTCOMES) in 2016. Conducted by Urban Institute, the project supported ACF in understanding how employment-related outcome measures could be meaningfully and practically implemented for TANF. The study explored: 1) the extent to which state TANF programs currently measure employment-related outcomes, and the practical lessons from those state experiences; 2) best practices in the development of performance measurement systems for employment-related outcomes, and the issues related to implementing such systems for TANF; and 3) ways to improve coordination across performance measurement systems for TANF, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training programs.

The project began with a review of pertinent literature and held discussions with selected state TANF directors. The OUTCOMES team also consulted with experts on TANF and performance measurement. The project's final report, [Measuring Employment Outcomes in TANF](#), offers information and insights to help policymakers and stakeholders understand the challenges and opportunities for measuring employment outcomes in the TANF program. It also illustrates the difficulty of

developing consistent national measures of employment outcomes in TANF that adhere to principles of good performance measurement.

Understanding Poverty: Childhood and Family Experiences and TANF Office Culture

The Administration for Children and Families is dedicated to promoting the economic and social well-being of families and children and thus has a particular interest in understanding the experiences of families within the systems designed to support them and move them out of poverty. While there are many facets to developing such an understanding, two crucial components are the operations of the programs themselves and the perspectives of families and children living in poverty. To that end, OPRE has undertaken the Understanding Poverty study, which launched in 2016 and is being conducted by MEF Associates in partnership with MDRC.

• TANF Office Culture

One component of this project explores how organizational culture, office design, and office procedures contribute to shaping clients' experiences with TANF, the services provided to them, and potentially their outcomes. The concept of organizational culture encompasses the organization's mission and vision in relation to its clients and the shared objectives guiding its work, as well as values, attitudes, expectations, assumptions, and norms. It also manifests in more concrete, everyday ways—such as physical location and office design, staff training, staffing decisions, employee decision-making and interactions with clients, and written procedures and materials. Fieldwork is focusing especially on exemplars of productive client-oriented office settings and organizational processes and culture as well as TANF offices that have made conscious attempts at organizational culture change.

• Childhood and Family Experiences

A second component of the project is examining the experiences and perspectives of children and families living in poverty, including the experiences of families who apply for and access TANF and other safety net benefits. A large body of research spanning decades has reflected a range of psychological, educational, health, and other serious and sometimes long-term impacts associated with severe economic disadvantage in childhood. While there is a growing literature on the lived experiences of adults in conditions of severe deprivation, less work has looked at how low-income children of various ages experience, perceive, and view the day-to-day circumstances of living in poverty. Interviews with approximately 50 children and youths as well as their parents are intended to

facilitate a deeper understanding of what children understand about their families' economic circumstances, how families talk about public assistance benefits, and other aspects of their life experiences.

To date, this project has published [a review of the qualitative literature on the experiences of parents and children living in poverty](#) and a [review of literature describing the role that organizational culture plays in the delivery of TANF services](#). Based on findings from the latter, OPRE also published an infographic on [Practicing Positive Organizational Culture in TANF Offices](#).

Initial fieldwork for both strands of this project is complete and reports on findings are expected to publish in 2021. In addition, both studies are currently conducting limited follow-up data collection to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the role of organizational culture and families' perceptions of their economic circumstances and experiences with public benefits programs. Taken together, the outcomes of this inquiry can be expected to improve the field's understanding of the lives of children in poverty and their families while further building an understanding of how the TANF program and organizational culture affect individuals within this population.

Promoting and Supporting Innovation in TANF Data

Promoting and Supporting Innovation in TANF Data, also known as the TANF Data Innovation (TDI) project, supports innovation and efficiency within the TANF program through enhanced use of data from TANF and related human services programs. The OPRE Division of Data and Improvement oversees this project with support from the Division of Economic Independence. Launched in 2017, TDI is led by MDRC in partnership with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, the Coleridge Initiative, and Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy at the University of Pennsylvania. The project's aim is to provide timely, actionable, and relevant technical assistance to federal, state, and local TANF agencies on a variety of issues related to TANF data. Topics will include integrated data systems, data sharing, promoting proper payments and program integrity, expanding analytic capacity, and overall increased use of TANF and related human services data for program improvement. TDI builds on the work of the earlier [Family Self-Sufficiency Data Center](#), which OPRE awarded to the University of Chicago in 2013 as a cooperative agreement for the development, implementation, and operations of a data center to support family self-sufficiency research and activities. The Data Center was one of the three components of OPRE's [Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Consortium](#).

The TDI project includes the following key tasks:

- Assessment of the needs of all 50 states regarding collecting, sharing, and using TANF data;
- Support to states and localities through the TANF Data Collaborative (www.tanfdata.org), including wide-ranging training and technical assistance for states and localities on a variety of topics related to TANF data use and creation and evaluation of eight TDI pilot sites;
- Assessment of existing state approaches to ensuring program integrity and proper payments in TANF; and
- Support to ACF's Office of Family Assistance on data-related tasks.

In 2019, TDI was expanded to include the TANF Employment Project (TEP). TEP supports the transformation of state-reported TANF data into a longitudinal format; expanded matching of TANF data with wage and unemployment insurance information from the National Directory of New Hires; and hosting the resulting data sets in a secure cloud environment to allow collaborative analysis between TDI researchers and ACF staff. TEP represents ACF's continued investment in using existing agency data to understand and manage the TANF program.

Across all TDI contract activities, the project will support the use of data for understanding the impact that TANF has on families broadly, and how the federal government and state partners can use data to better serve families.

State TANF Case Studies

OPRE launched the State TANF Case Studies project in 2018. The purpose of the project, which is being conducted by Mathematica, is to identify and provide in-depth, systematic case studies of promising and innovative employment and training programs for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals. There will be a particular focus on programs that have strong linkages with wraparound support services, with special emphasis on child care assistance. The project aims to increase ACF's knowledge about strategies that TANF and workforce development agencies are implementing to help TANF recipients and other low-income individuals become economically self-sufficient. This descriptive study will identify innovative programs through a scan of the field and stakeholder engagement, which includes interviews with program staff and participants, and structured case reviews. Data collection began in October 2019.

Supporting Partnerships to Advance Research and Knowledge

A growing number of TANF and workforce development agencies are interested in becoming better users and

producers of high-quality research in order to improve programs for low-income families; however, many of these agencies currently lack the expertise and capacity to integrate data and evidence into their program practices. ACF has responded to this need through investments to strengthen the evaluation capacity of human services agencies through the provision of evaluation technical assistance (TA). In 2012, ACF launched the [Advancing Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency Research Project](#) to support state and local human services agencies with research and evaluation activities, and subsequently awarded a [follow-on contract](#) to continue this work. Under these contracts, the project developed the "Learn, Innovate, Improve" (LI²) framework, which is a research-based approach to program improvement that embeds analytic methods in the process of designing, implementing, and iteratively testing program changes.

Building on this work, the ACF Office of Family Assistance awarded the Rapid Cycle Evaluation and Training Technical Assistance (RCE TTA) contract, an ongoing project that provides TA to state and local TANF agencies. RCE TTA has focused on the first two phases of LI², "Learn" and "Innovate," which are centered on assisting agencies with identifying, designing, and implementing program changes.

To complement these efforts, in 2019 OPRE launched Supporting Partnerships to Advance Research and Knowledge (Project SPARK), which aims to provide research and evaluation TA to state, tribal, and local TANF programs currently or formerly engaged under RCE TTA. Led by Mathematica, this project will support those agencies in advancing their existing initiatives into the "Improve" phase of the process, which focuses on evaluating program changes or innovations using pilot tests or other approaches. This project will also enable programs to share their innovations, findings, and useful resources with the other sites involved in the project.

In March 2020, TANF programs experienced an unprecedented disruption in service delivery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the project has engaged in a collaborative process with sites to identify and develop strategies to address these changes to their work.

Further, in recognizing that LI² is just one method for providing evaluation TA, the project aims to document existing evaluation TA approaches and examine whether certain approaches are more promising than others at building evaluation capacity within agencies. This new work will assess the landscape of current or previous evaluation TA activities in human services program contexts, ask what can be learned from other fields that have examined this question, and document lessons to inform future federal evaluation capacity-building efforts.

EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOR MARKET

A major focus of OPRE's welfare and family self-sufficiency research is increasing knowledge about strategies for helping TANF recipients and other low-income individuals find jobs, maintain employment, and advance in the labor market. Major past projects include: the [Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation](#), which tested several strategies for helping hard-to-employ parents find and sustain employment; the [Employment Retention and Advancement Project](#), which tested strategies for helping employed individuals keep their jobs and advance in the workforce; and the [National Evaluation of Welfare to Work Strategies](#), which evaluated the effectiveness of mandatory welfare-to-work programs during the welfare reform era of the 1990s.

OPRE is currently conducting random assignment experiments of employment strategies, including [subsidized and transitional employment models](#), [job search assistance](#), [coaching practices aimed at job entry and retention](#), and approaches targeting hard-to-employ populations including [low-income individuals with behavioral health issues such as opioid dependency, substance abuse, and/or mental health challenges](#). OPRE seeks to increase the number of evidence-supported interventions for low-income populations seeking employment and economic stability. In addition, OPRE's congressionally mandated [Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse](#) is building on the earlier [Employment Strategies Evidence Review](#). In early 2019, OPRE also convened a roundtable of subject matter experts to identify gaps in knowledge of employment and training approaches for low-income populations and recipients of social safety net benefits.

Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration

OPRE launched the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED) in 2010 with the goal of demonstrating and evaluating the next generation of subsidized employment models for critical low-income populations. The project, led by MDRC, examines strategies for providing counter-cyclical employment and for successfully transitioning individuals from short-term, subsidized employment to unsubsidized employment in the regular labor market. These strategies build upon approaches that have demonstrated effectiveness in previous studies and also test new and innovative interventions. The evaluation includes a

random assignment impact evaluation in eight sites, an implementation evaluation at each project site, and a cost-benefit analysis. An in-program survey measured potential non-economic benefits of subsidized employment, such as emotional and social well-being.

The STED project was conducted in close coordination with the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD). A project of the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) at the Department of Labor (DOL), ETJD funded seven grantees to provide temporary, paid work experiences to noncustodial parents and ex-offenders to improve their employability, earnings, and opportunities for advancement. Given the complementary nature of these efforts, OPRE and ETA entered into a memorandum of agreement to coordinate the STED and ETJD studies, including shared data collection instruments, shared evaluation sites, and coordinated reporting efforts.

Institute for Research on Poverty National Poverty Center Fellows

The National Poverty Center Fellows Program was established in 2013 in order to build the capacity of emerging researchers to conduct high-quality, policy-relevant research on poverty and inequality in the United States. The program is administered by the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a grant from OPRE and the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation that supports post-doctoral fellows in residence at OPRE. The fellows conduct poverty-related research and analysis, contribute to planning and consulting on OPRE research and evaluation studies, and work on their own ACF-related research projects.

Two fellows are currently in residence in the Division of Economic Independence and the Division of Data and Improvement at OPRE, where they are working on a variety of projects related to employment and training, disparities in human services, services for refugees, innovative research methods and measurement questions, and other poverty and safety net studies.

STED began with an analysis of what was known about existing or previous approaches to subsidized employment, especially within the context of current TANF policies and requirements, as well as efforts under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In 2011, OPRE released [Subsidizing Employment Opportunities](#)

[for Low-Income Families: A Review of State Employment Programs Created Through the TANF Emergency Fund.](#)

Following this initial scan, the project team recruited eight sites to participate in the evaluation:

SITE	DESCRIPTION
Good Transitions <i>Goodwill of North Georgia</i>	This DOL-funded program provided transitional jobs in Goodwill locations to low-income, noncustodial parents referred to the program by the child support agency.
TransitionsSF <i>Goodwill and the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services</i>	This DOL-funded program provided transitional jobs to low-income, noncustodial parents using a tiered approach that placed participants into one of three tiers — traditional transitional job, public sector position, or subsidized private sector placement — based on employability characteristics.
Transitional Subsidized Employment <i>Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services</i>	Los Angeles County tested two different program models for low-income individuals: 1) paid work experience in non-profit or public sector placements; and 2) “hybrid” on-the-job training in for-profit, private sector placements.
Jobs Now STEP Forward <i>San Francisco City and County Agency for Human Services</i>	San Francisco tested private sector (both non-profit and for-profit) subsidized employment placements for low-income individuals who timed out of TANF or exhausted Unemployment Insurance benefits.
Young Adult Internship Program <i>New York City Center for Economic Opportunity</i>	The Young Adult Internship Program targeted disconnected youth — neither in school nor working for at least three months — ages 16 to 24 and provided initial training followed by a private sector (for- or non-profit) internship for up to 12 weeks.
Bridges to Pathways <i>Chicago Department of Family and Support Services</i>	Developed in partnership with the Chicago Crime Lab and University of Chicago, the Department of Family and Support Services operated a pilot of the Bridges to Pathways Initiative, which targeted 16- to 24-year-olds leaving incarceration and included three components: 1) a transitional job; 2) an online high school program; and 3) a cognitive behavioral therapy-like program.
MSTED <i>Minnesota Department of Human Services</i>	This program targeted clients of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (the state’s TANF program) who were not working and who had been in the program for at least six months. The program featured two tiers: 1) an eight-week structured work experience in non-profit or public agencies designed to build participants’ soft skills and work experience; and 2) a 16-week subsidized job in the private sector. Participants could start in either tier depending on their work-readiness.
Atlanta Paycheck Plus <i>United Way of Greater Atlanta</i>	This program offers an enhanced Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income individuals without dependent children. As with the other STED programs, this site provides work-based income support, although in regular, not transitional, jobs. This approach has similar goals as the other STED programs — to increase the employability and income of low-income individuals — and it targets many of the same groups (young adults, former prisoners, and noncustodial parents).

In March 2020, the project published a [synthesis report](#) that summarizes findings across all of the programs evaluated as part of STED and ETJD and discusses implications for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. The report also presents employment and

earnings impacts over an extended follow-up period of up to five years for each program.

A text box below details the reports published by STED to date. Additional reports will be available in 2021 and beyond.

Reports from the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration

2015:

- [Testing the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs: An Introduction to the Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration and the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration](#)

2016:

- [The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs](#)

2017:

- [Reengaging New York City's Disconnected Youth Through Work: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Young Adult Internship Program](#)

2018:

- [The Effects of Subsidized and Transitional Employment Programs on Noneconomic Well-Being](#)
- [Testing Rapid Connections to Subsidized Private Sector Jobs for Low-Income Individuals in San Francisco: Implementation and Early Impacts of the STEP Forward Program](#)
- [Forging a Path: Impacts and Costs of New York City's Young Adult Internship Program](#)
- [Tribal Solutions: Subsidized Employment Programs Serving American Indians and Alaska Natives](#)
- [The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration: New Perspectives on Creating Jobs – Final Impacts of the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs](#)

2019:

- [Findings from In-Depth Interviews with Participants in Subsidized Employment Programs](#)
- [The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration](#)
- [Testing Two Subsidized Employment Models for TANF Recipients: Final Impacts and Costs of the Los Angeles County Transitional Subsidized Employment Program](#)
- [Engaging Young Men Involved in Chicago's Justice System: A Feasibility Study of the Bridges to Pathways Program](#)

2020:

- [The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Cost Analysis of the STEP Forward Program](#)
- [The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Cost Analysis of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration](#)
- [Can Subsidized Employment Programs Help Disadvantaged Job Seekers? A Synthesis of Findings from Evaluations of 13 Programs](#)
- [A More Generous Earned Income Tax Credit for Singles: Interim Findings from the Paycheck Plus Demonstration in Atlanta](#)

Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation

In 2013, OPRE launched the Job Search Assistance (JSA) Strategies Evaluation. Led by Abt Associates and its partner Mathematica, JSA was a multi-site, random assignment evaluation of the relative impact of different

TANF job search approaches on short-term labor market outcomes such as earnings and time to employment. JSA built on OPRE's [Design Options of the Search for Employment](#) project, which included a literature review and recommendations for an overall approach to and design of a job search strategies evaluation. JSA drew from this work to conduct the first rigorous test of job search services for TANF recipients.

The JSA evaluation aimed to achieve two goals: 1) provide information about the relative impacts of various job search assistance services and the manner in which agencies provide them; and 2) offer actionable and policy-relevant feedback to the TANF field, including federal TANF policymakers, state and local TANF administrators, and frontline caseworkers.

The JSA evaluation used a random assignment experimental design and included an impact and implementation evaluation carried out across the selected sites. In addition to administrative data, the

study also included a survey of participants, administered approximately six months after random assignment, to capture information on intensity and duration of JSA services, how participants found their current job, attitudes and motivations around the job search, and barriers to employment.

The job search assistance approaches tested in JSA were relatively short-term in nature. Impact and implementation studies were conducted in three sites and implementation-only studies were conducted in two additional sites.

SITE	TYPE OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
New York City Human Resources Administration	Impact and Implementation	New York City tested its existing approach, which required 35 hours of participation per week including group job search classes, compared to supervised job search in which clients had one-on-one, weekly meetings with a staff person to assist them with their job search, but otherwise conduct a self-directed search. The study operated at two vendors (America Works and Goodwill) in Brooklyn and Queens.
Sacramento County (CA) Department of Human Assistance	Impact and Implementation	Sacramento County tested: 1) three weeks of group job search and workplace behavior skills instruction followed by one-on-one job search assistance and daily meetings with staff compared to 2) three-and-a-half days of group job search instruction followed by independent job search and weekly meetings with staff.
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (Genesee and Wayne Counties)	Impact and Implementation	Genesee County (which includes Flint) and Wayne County (excluding the Detroit area) tested enhancements to their existing 21-day Applicant Eligibility Period (AEP) and the PATH (Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope.) program. The enhancement included a service delivery framework that uses a tool called the “Bridge of Strength,” a revised orientation, modified accountability measures in lieu of the work participation rate, and training for treatment group case managers on how to coach clients and use a number of goal achievement tools.
Westchester County (NY) Department of Social Services	Implementation only	JSA conducted an implementation study of Westchester County’s supervised, one-on-one job search compared to the full-time, classroom-based STRIVE program. STRIVE is an eight-week program that includes four weeks of training on behavioral change and job readiness skills followed by four weeks of some form of supervised job search.
Ramsey County (MN)	Implementation only	JSA conducted an implementation study of Ramsey County’s Lifelong Learning Initiative (LLI). LLI includes enhanced approaches to assessments, orientations, counseling, and staff assistance (with a focus on goal setting and coaching).

As of late 2020, reports on four of the five sites have been released:

- [*Implementation of a Goal-Oriented Approach to Providing Employment Services to Cash Assistance Recipients: The Lifelong Learning Initiative in Ramsey County, Minnesota*](#)
- [*Implementation and Relative Impacts of Two Job Search Assistance Programs in New York City*](#)
- [*Implementation and Relative Impacts of Two Job Search Assistance Programs in Sacramento County, California*](#)
- [*Implementation and Impact of a Goal-Oriented Coaching Program for Cash Assistance Recipients in Michigan*](#)

The fifth and final site report will be published in early 2021. JSA concluded in 2020 following the publication of a [*cross-site brief*](#), which synthesizes impact study findings and provides summary conclusions. Key findings from the brief are highlighted in the text box on this page.

Key Findings from the Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation

[*The Effectiveness of Different Approaches for Moving Cash Assistance Recipients to Work: Findings from the Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation*](#)

- Programs with more demanding participation requirements and the goal-oriented coaching program generally increased the receipt of assistance on job search skills and/or workplace behaviors and soft skills.
- In all three impact study sites, there were no detectable impacts on employment (the confirmatory outcome) or earnings over the six-month follow-up period.
- In New York City, the program with the more demanding participation requirement reduced the proportion of applications that were approved for cash assistance. In Michigan and Sacramento County, no impacts on the receipt of cash assistance or SNAP benefits were detected.
- Different approaches demonstrated similar employment and public benefit outcomes for cash assistance recipients. As a result, other considerations, such as cost or program preferences, may appropriately drive choices in providing employment-related assistance as part of cash assistance programs. rights, safety, and privacy of participants.

[**Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations**](#)

In 2016, OPRE launched the Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations. Conducted by Mathematica, with partners Abt Associates and MDRC, the evaluation is using an experimental design to examine the effectiveness of coaching interventions that focus on both job entry and retention and that target TANF populations and other low-income individuals. The evaluation is also examining the effect of coaching on self-regulation skills, and the role of these skills in generating any impacts on employment outcomes.

The project developed a conceptual framework for measuring self-regulation skills in the context of evaluations of employment programs. The paper, [*Measuring Self-Regulation Skills in Evaluations of Employment Programs for Low-Income Populations: Challenges and Recommendations*](#), was published in 2018. To build on this framework, the project conducted empirical analyses of the validity of measures of self-regulation skills and will share findings in a special topics paper that will publish in early 2021. Additionally, in 2019, the project released a brief, [*Employment Coaching: Working with Low-Income Populations to Use Self-Regulation Skills to Achieve Employment Goals*](#), that discusses the definition of and theory behind coaching and examines how coaching interventions might affect self-regulation skills. The project also published the [*Evaluation of Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations: Evaluation Design Report*](#), which details the design of the evaluation and includes the survey and interview tools used in the data collection.

Included on the next page is a list of the coaching models participating in the evaluation. In 2019, the project published [*Employment Coaching Program Snapshots*](#) that share key characteristics of each of these models. In late 2020, the project collected descriptive information regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic affected these programs' operations and study participants' program engagement and needs. The project will use this information to help contextualize the evaluation's findings and account for the pandemic in analysis. The project anticipates releasing descriptive findings from the evaluation in late 2020 and early 2021 and impact findings beginning in 2021.

EMPLOYMENT COACHING MODELS	LOCATION(S)
<u>Family Development and Self-Sufficiency</u>	Iowa Department of Human Rights
<u>Goal4 It!™</u>	Jefferson County Department of Human Services (CO)
<u>LIFT</u>	New York, NY Chicago, IL Los Angeles, CA
<u>MyGoals for Employment Success</u>	Baltimore, MD Houston, TX

Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse

The Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse is a congressionally mandated review of the evidence on interventions designed to help low-income job seekers succeed in the labor market. To provide reliable, accessible information about what works to help low-income people find and keep gainful employment, the Pathways Clearinghouse provides a comprehensive, transparent, and systematic assessment of the effectiveness of interventions that aim to improve employment outcomes, reduce employment challenges, and support self-sufficiency for populations who are low income, especially TANF and other public assistance recipients.

The Clearinghouse has several goals:

- Conduct a transparent, comprehensive search to identify relevant studies;
- Rate the quality of those studies to assess the strength of the evidence they provide on the different interventions;
- Determine the evidence of effectiveness for those interventions;
- Share the results, as well as other Clearinghouse products, on a user-friendly website to help state and local TANF administrators, policymakers, researchers, and the general public make sense of the results and better understand how this evidence might apply to questions and contexts that matter to them; and
- Summarize the overall state of evidence in the field by creating and disseminating new reports that synthesize findings from the review and gaps in existing evidence.

The Pathways Clearinghouse builds on the work of OPRE's [Employment Strategies for Low-Income Adults Evidence Review](#), by including newer and wider-reaching research and assessing the effectiveness of the interventions reviewed. The project also collaborates with and learns from other federal clearinghouse efforts.

The [Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse](#) website launched in 2020, featuring the results of the evidence review for 161 interventions and 216 studies. The website provides detailed information on these interventions and studies, including their effectiveness rating, effect by outcome domain, and – for interventions with evidence of effectiveness – information about how the interventions were implemented. As of late 2020, the website features a host of additional, supplemental products including [a report detailing the standards and methods used to conduct the review, an introductory video, and a webinar recording of the public launch event for the Clearinghouse](#). A number of other products will be forthcoming in 2021, including several reports synthesizing what can be learned by looking at evidence across interventions.

This project, which began in 2018, is led by Mathematica with assistance from MEF Associates and Hager Sharp.

Next Steps for Employment and Training Research: Roundtable and White Papers

The purpose of this project, which launched in 2017, is to identify gaps in knowledge of employment and training approaches for low-income populations and recipients of social safety net benefits, in order to inform potential future directions for research and evaluation. This aim will be accomplished by convening a roundtable of subject matter experts to discuss the gaps in research and by producing a series of complementary white papers.

The Next Steps for Employment and Training Research Roundtable was held in January 2019 in Washington, DC. The U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office served as a key partner to OPRE in organizing the convening. Invitees included a mix of researchers, employers, practitioners, and federal staff. The Roundtable consisted of presentations on and group discussions of specific topics within the area of employment and training including strengthening sectoral strategies in serving disadvantaged

populations, assessing and improving implementation of program models, and implications of the changing nature of work for job skills and work quality and stability.

In June 2020 the project published, [*Employment and Training Programs Serving Low-Income Populations: Next Steps for Research*](#), which synthesizes themes from the 2019 Roundtable, summarizes what is known from past and current research, identifies knowledge gaps, and proposes a set of potential research questions that can help define future research opportunities. As of late 2020, the project is working on two additional white papers. One focuses on potential changes in the labor market and nature of work over the next 10 to 15 years and implications for research on employment and training programs supporting low-income workers. The other paper will summarize a scan of the field and expert consultations on interdisciplinary approaches to inform future employment and training strategies for low-income populations and further expand the knowledge base.

The project is being conducted by MEF Associates in partnership with MDRC.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS PORTFOLIO

Several past and ongoing OPRE-sponsored evaluations have sought to evaluate programs or interventions that connect low-income individuals to the labor force. While these studies have demonstrated that different types of interventions can improve labor market outcomes for vulnerable groups, the duration and magnitude of impacts varies substantially, and many questions remain. Further, recent developments in the labor market and policy trends have inspired new questions.

Through the [*Innovative Strategies for Addressing Employment Barriers Portfolio*](#), OPRE seeks to build on the lessons learned from and gaps in knowledge revealed by these previous and current studies, and identify and rigorously evaluate the “next generation” of employment strategies. The portfolio is comprised of two OPRE projects: the **Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families** (BEES) project and the **Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies** (NextGen) project. These projects aim to advance the evidence base by considering for evaluation a wide range of employment strategies for highly vulnerable populations with complex barriers to obtaining and retaining employment, such as physical and mental health conditions, a criminal history, or limited work skills and experience.

Additionally, as part of this portfolio, OPRE is partnering with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to incorporate a focus on employment-related early interventions for individuals with current or foreseeable disabilities who have limited work history and are potential applicants for Supplemental Security Income. SSA is providing financial and technical support for the evaluation and/or service provision of selected interventions within the BEES and NextGen projects.

Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families

For more than two decades, researchers have studied the effectiveness of programs, policies, and practices in TANF-supported employment and training services. Given the changes in the characteristics of caseload populations, labor demands, and the skills needed to advance in the workforce, TANF agencies have innovated over time, resulting in interventions appropriate for new research and evaluation.

In 2017, OPRE launched Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families (BEES). The project aims to build on and complement current state and federal efforts, efficiently move selected interventions or program models to the next level of evidence, and ultimately, increase the number of evidence-supported interventions for low-income populations seeking employment and economic stability. Led by MDRC in partnership with Abt Associates and MEF Associates, BEES will assist ACF in building evidence for innovative interventions aimed at supporting low-income individuals and families seeking employment, advances in the labor market, and economic security. The project has a particular interest in 1) innovative approaches to addressing barriers to employment and 2) interventions designed to improve employment outcomes for individuals with behavioral health challenges that create barriers to employment, including substance use disorder, opioid use disorder, and/or mental health issues.

Further, in 2019, BEES partnered with the Social Security Administration to support evaluation of early employment interventions for those with current or foreseeable disabilities who may be at risk of applying for Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Income.

Since the project's inception, BEES has consulted with more than a dozen federal agencies to identify emerging priorities for evidence building and conducted a broad field scan to learn about innovative programs. Through this field scan, BEES has identified on the next page the list of initial sites for further study or evaluation:

SITE	TYPE OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM
Addiction Recovery Care <i>Kentucky</i>	Impact, Implementation, Cost	A mature, innovative program that combines treatment and recovery services with workforce development for individuals struggling with substance use disorder
Breaking Barriers San Diego <i>California</i>	Long-Term Data Analysis	A program designed to increase employment among TANF recipients and other low-income individuals with disabilities, including substance use disorder and mental health issues
Central City Concern <i>Oregon</i>	Impact, Implementation, Cost	A program based in Portland, Oregon, that provides treatment for substance use disorder, healthcare, housing, and comprehensive employment services
Individual Placement and Support (IPS) within Federal Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) <i>Illinois and New Hampshire</i>	Impact, Implementation, Cost	An evidence-based approach, the IPS model will be tested within two FQHC sites, offering employment services to unemployed and underemployed behavioral health clients within FQHC settings
The Journey <i>Ohio</i>	Impact, Implementation, Cost	A program based in the Franklin and Stark Counties Child Support Enforcement Agencies that provides employment supports, structured parenting classes, and individualized case management to noncustodial parents with new child support cases
Substance Use Disorder Sites <i>Multiple states</i>	Descriptive	Several programs that provide employment services to individuals with substance use disorder
Two-Generation Residential Mobility Demonstration <i>Illinois</i>	Impact, Implementation, Cost	A demonstration program that is part of the Creating Moves to Opportunity initiative and is designed to help families living in concentrated poverty make sustained moves to better neighborhoods while helping the parents and young adults in those families improve their success in the labor market
WorkAdvance <i>Multiple states</i>	Long-Term Data Analysis	An innovative employment approach designed to help low-income disadvantaged workers prepare for and enter quality jobs with opportunities for advancement

The project will continue to work with states to identify interventions that are focused on improving employment, training, and economic security for low-income families. After interventions are identified, ACF and its contractors will determine the most rigorous evaluation approach feasible, focusing on random assignment designs where possible.

This multi-pronged research effort will produce individual reports for each intervention evaluated in addition to developing special topics papers.

Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies

Many people have trouble fulfilling their goal of economic independence because they face complex challenges to finding and keeping a job. Moreover, decades of research on programs for people with complex barriers to employment show mixed results.

In 2018, OPRE contracted with Mathematica to conduct the Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies (NextGen) project to build on lessons learned and gaps in knowledge revealed by previous and current studies.

NextGen is identifying and testing innovative, promising employment interventions designed to improve employment and economic outcomes for low-income people with complex challenges to employment. These challenges may be physical and mental health conditions, a criminal history, or limited work skills and experience. Additionally, in response to the growing recognition of the importance of employer engagement in job training and workforce integration programs, NextGen has a special focus on market-oriented or employer-driven programs, including social enterprises—organizations that hire workers who face complex challenges to produce goods or services for commercial sale.

Key components of the NextGen project include:

- *Impact Study* – to examine interventions’ impact on participants’ employment and earnings, and other outcomes of interest.
- *Descriptive Study* – to describe the design and operations of the interventions, and to document the outcomes of participants served by the interventions. The project may also conduct case studies of the role of employers and market-oriented programs in assisting individuals with complex challenges to obtain and retain employment.
- *Cost Study* – to examine interventions’ sources of funding, use of resources to implement the approach, costs and benefits, and sustainability.

To date, five interventions have been selected to participate in the NextGen project.

INTERVENTION NAME AND LOCATION	TYPE OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
Bridges from School to Work (Bridges) <i>Bridges programs in Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Oakland, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC</i>	Impact, Descriptive, Cost	Employer-driven program that provides job readiness instruction, placement, and post-placement support for young adults with disabilities
Families Achieving Success Today (FAST) <i>Ramsey County Workforce Solutions (MN)</i>	Impact, Descriptive, Cost	Adaptation of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model designed to help TANF clients with physical or mental health challenges achieve competitive employment
Individual Placement and Support for Individuals with Justice Involvement <i>Selected mental health centers (pending)</i>	Impact, Descriptive, Cost	IPS implemented with adults who have mental health conditions and have recently been released from jail or prison following the completion of a sentence or have begun to serve an alternative sentence in the community
Work Success <i>Utah Department of Workforce Services</i>	Impact, Descriptive, Cost	Statewide program that provides TANF recipients and other low-income clients with coaching, employment and life skills training, and peer support to help them find and keep a job
Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation, and Employment (WeCARE) <i>New York City Human Resources Administration</i>	Descriptive	Mature citywide initiative that addresses the needs of cash assistance clients with medical and/or mental health barriers to employment

Lessons learned from the NextGen project will be shared with a broad range of stakeholders such as policymakers, practitioners, program developers, and researchers across the welfare, workforce, disability, education, and justice communities. The study team anticipates that

findings from the descriptive and cost studies are likely to be released beginning in 2021, and early findings on the effectiveness of the interventions are likely to be released beginning in 2023.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

OPRE has a strong history of sponsoring rigorous research on the effectiveness of education and training strategies for improving employment and earnings for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals. Currently, OPRE is a national leader in the rigorous evaluation of post-secondary career pathways programs. Career pathways programs connect education, training, and related supports in a pathway that leads to employment in a specific sector or occupation or to further training. The approach is gaining attention as a promising strategy to improve post-secondary education and training outcomes for low-income and low-skilled adults.

Beginning in 2007, with the launch of the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education project and continuing with the evaluations of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants program, ACF has developed a robust portfolio of research on the career pathways approach.

Career Pathways

The career pathways framework has attracted increasing attention as a promising approach to post-secondary education and training for low-income and low-skilled adults. Its central feature is instruction that is organized as a series of manageable and well-articulated steps accompanied by strong supports and connections to employment. The steps provide opportunities for pre-college-level students to access college-level training and for better-skilled students to move to successively higher levels of credential-bearing training and employment. Each step incorporates customized curricula and instruction, academic and non-academic supports, and employment experiences and opportunities.

To engage, retain, and facilitate learning among low-skilled adults, the career pathways framework includes four categories of service strategies: 1) assessments of skills and needs; 2) promising and innovative approaches to basic skills instruction and occupational training; 3) academic and non-academic supports; and 4) approaches for connecting students with career-track employment opportunities. Within each of these categories, there are a variety of promising strategies. Though many programs include all of these strategies, the extent to which and ways they do so vary.

For more information visit www.career-pathways.org.

Evaluation Portfolio for the Health Profession Opportunity Grants Program

The Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program provides education and training to TANF recipients and other low-income individuals for occupations in the health-care field that pay well and are expected to either experience labor shortages or be in high demand. The HPOG Program is administered by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within ACF.

The HPOG Program uses the career pathways framework of postsecondary occupational training and education to address the challenge of preparing nontraditional student populations for gainful employment while considering their various assets and challenges related to education and work. HPOG grantee programs are expected to target skills and competencies demanded by the healthcare industry; support career pathways; result in an employer- or industry-recognized certificate or degree; combine supportive services with education and training services to help participants overcome barriers to employment; and provide training and services at times and locations that are easily accessible to targeted populations.

In 2010, OFA awarded the first round of HPOG grants to 32 organizations located across 23 states to carry out five-year programs (referred to as HPOG 1.0). In 2015, OFA awarded a second round of HPOG grants to 32 organizations located across 21 states for a new five-year period (referred to as HPOG 2.0). Recently, OFA extended HPOG 2.0 for an additional 12 months, ending September 2021. [OFA's website](#) provides additional information about the HPOG Program.

HPOG was authorized as a demonstration program with a mandated federal evaluation. OPRE developed a multi-pronged evaluation strategy to assess the success of the HPOG Program. The evaluation strategy aims to provide information on program implementation, systems change, participant outcomes, impacts, and costs and benefits. OPRE's evaluation portfolio for HPOG includes a number of components.

Evaluations of HPOG 1.0:

The evaluations of HPOG 1.0 have largely concluded, with the exception of follow-up studies to assess the intermediate and long-term impacts of HPOG 1.0 and grants

awarded in 2019 to support secondary data analysis (see the descriptions appearing later in this section for Career Pathways Outcomes Studies and Career Pathways Secondary Data Analysis Grants). Below are brief descriptions of the most recently concluded HPOG 1.0 evaluations, both of which were conducted by Abt Associates and Urban Institute; additional information is available on [OPRE's website](#).

- **[HPOG National Implementation Evaluation \(NIE\)](#)** included an in-depth examination of the HPOG grantee programs' design and implementation, a systems analysis of networks created by HPOG programs, and a quantitative descriptive analysis of HPOG program outputs and outcomes.
- **[The HPOG Impact Study](#)** used an experimental design to examine the short-term impacts of HPOG on participants' educational and economic outcomes at about 15 months after random assignment. Some grantees implemented a multi-arm experimental design to test the effectiveness of three program enhancements: facilitated peer support groups, emergency assistance, and non-cash incentives. Additionally, the evaluation used non-experimental methods to examine the relative contributions of various program characteristics. As noted above, OPRE is also supporting longer-term follow-up of participants in the HPOG Impact Study.

Evaluations of HPOG 2.0:

- **[Evaluation and System Design for Career Pathways Programs: 2nd Generation of HPOG](#)**
The purpose of this project, led by Abt Associates in partnership with Urban Institute and AKA Enterprise Solutions, Inc., is to provide recommendations for the design of an evaluation to assess the implementation, outcomes, systems change, and impacts of the HPOG 2.0 programs. Additionally, this project built and provides ongoing maintenance and support for the HPOG Participant Accomplishment and Grant Evaluation System (PAGES), a web-based management information system, to track grantee progress for program management and to record grantee and participant data for use in HPOG 2.0 evaluations.

Additionally, the project develops annual reports based on PAGES data that describe program offerings and participant characteristics and outcomes. Four annual reports have been released to date: the [Year One Annual Report](#) (released in 2017); the [Year Two Annual Report](#) (released in 2018); the [Year Three Annual Report](#) (released in 2019); and the [Year Four Annual Report](#) (released in June 2020). The project also produces special topics papers; three have been released to date:

- [Career Prospects for Certified Nursing Assistants: Insights for Training Programs and Policymakers from the HPOG Program](#)
- [Targeting Higher Skills and Healthcare Jobs: How HPOG Grantees Set and Use Performance Goals](#)
- [Which Program Characteristics are Linked to Program Impacts? Lessons from the HPOG 1.0 Evaluation](#)

Summary of Fourth-Year HPOG 2.0 Participant Activities and Outcomes from the [HPOG 2.0 Year Four Annual Report](#)

- From its start through the end of Year 4, HPOG 2.0 grantee programs enrolled 30,927 participants. About 20,400 participants began healthcare training in the first four years of HPOG 2.0, and 85 percent of them had completed training or were still in progress by the end of Year 4. Of participants completing healthcare training in the first four years of HPOG 2.0, more than two-thirds went on to earn a professional license or certification, and 65 percent started a job in healthcare or were promoted within an existing job in the field.
- More than one-third of all participants engaged in stand-alone basic skills training (not combined with occupational training); of those, 91 percent had completed or were still engaged in that training at the end of Year 4. Of those who completed, 79 percent moved on to enroll in healthcare training.
- Under a set of overall career progress metrics that combine multiple ways individuals can make progress (including basic skills or prerequisites completion, healthcare training completion, and employment), 56 percent of HPOG participants showed overall career progress by the end of Year 4, and another 10 percent were engaged in activities toward career progress.
- Similar to results for earlier years, participants in HPOG 2.0 are mainly single, female, and have dependent children. At the time of enrollment, the most common benefit received was Medicaid (67 percent), followed by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (58 percent) and TANF (20 percent). More than half had some college education, about one-third already had a professional license or certification, and about one-quarter were in school at the time of enrollment in the program.
- HPOG 2.0 participants engage in a variety of activities and receive a variety of supportive services. For example, almost half engaged in skill-development activities and almost half received transportation assistance. HPOG 2.0 funded tuition in whole or in part for the majority (83 percent) of participants' healthcare trainings.

- **National and Tribal Evaluation of the 2nd Generation of HPOG**

OPRE awarded a contract in 2015 to Abt Associates, in partnership with MEF Associates, Urban Institute, Insight Policy Research, and NORC at the University of Chicago, to undertake impact, outcome, and implementation studies of the second round of grants awarded under the HPOG program. Under this contract, OPRE is conducting evaluations of the 27 non-tribal HPOG 2.0 grantees (HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation) and the five Tribal HPOG 2.0 grantees (HPOG 2.0 Tribal Evaluation).

- **HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation:** The HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation includes a descriptive evaluation, impact evaluation, and cost-benefit study. Data sources for all three components of the National Evaluation include program data, administrative data from the National Directory of New Hires and National Student Clearinghouse, and participant follow-up surveys at approximately 15 and 36 months after random assignment. In 2020, OPRE awarded the HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation Long-term Follow-up Study (HPOG 2.0 LT) contract to Abt Associates and its partners, Urban Institute and MEF Associates. The study extends the follow-up period of the impact evaluation and cost-benefit analysis to approximately five to six years after random assignment using administrative data and a follow-up survey that will be fielded approximately 60 months after random assignment.
 - The descriptive evaluation includes implementation, systems change, and outcomes studies and will help interpret findings from the impact study. The [descriptive evaluation design report](#) presents detailed information on the design of the implementation, systems change, and outcome studies. The [descriptive evaluation analysis plan](#) supplements the design report by presenting detailed plans for analyses to address key research questions. The project has also published a [research design plan](#) for conducting in-depth interviews with HPOG 2.0 participants.
 - The impact evaluation is rigorously assessing the impacts of HPOG programs administered by the non-tribal grantees. The 27 non-tribal grantees operate 38 HPOG programs across 17 states. For the impact evaluation, eligible participants are randomly assigned to either a treatment group that can access HPOG services or a control group that cannot access HPOG but can access any other education, training, and services available in the community (“business as usual”). The [impact evaluation design plan](#) presents information on the design of the impact

evaluation, key research questions, and the methods that will be used to estimate the impact of HPOG 2.0 programs. The [impact evaluation’s analysis plan](#), which was published in early 2020 provides additional information on how analyses to estimate the impact of HPOG will be conducted. The impact evaluation’s short-term impact report is expected in 2021 and will present impact findings approximately 15 months after random assignment. Key findings from this forthcoming report are shared in a text box on this page.

- The evaluation also includes a cost-benefit analysis to assess the costs and benefits of a standard HPOG program. The [cost-benefit analysis design plan](#) includes information on how costs and benefits will be estimated and compared. OPRE released the [analysis plan for the cost-benefit analyses](#) in early 2020.

Key Findings from the HPOG 2.0 Short-Term Impact Report

- **HPOG 2.0 substantially increases educational progress in the short term, the study’s confirmatory outcome.** About 15 months after randomization, 63 percent of the treatment group are making educational progress, defined as having completed training by earning a credential or having been continuously enrolled in training, compared to 46 percent of the control group (an impact of 16 percentage points).
- **HPOG 2.0 leads to large relative increases across a range of other training measures, including cumulative months of training,** receipt of a credential, receipt of an exam-based certification or license, and completing at least six months of training.
- **In the short term, HPOG 2.0 does not have an impact on overall employment but does increase employment in healthcare occupations.** About 45% of the treatment group obtained employment in healthcare occupations, compared to 41% of the control group (an impact of 4 percentage points).
- **HPOG 2.0 does not increase earnings in the short term but does improve two potential precursors for future earnings.** HPOG 2.0 increases career connectedness, defined as being engaged full-time in work or school or at least part-time in both, and self-assessed career progress.

- **HPOG 2.0 Tribal Evaluation:** The five Tribal HPOG 2.0 grantees are participating in a comprehensive implementation and outcome study led by NORC at the University of Chicago. The HPOG 2.0 Tribal Evaluation is assessing the HPOG programs administered by the Tribal grantees using sound scientific methods and grounded in culturally appropriate approaches. The evaluation is guided by the principles outlined in [A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities](#), developed by ACF's Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Tribal Workgroup. The Tribal Evaluation is using a mixed-methods approach and is collecting quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources. The research questions focus on the Tribal HPOG programs' structure, processes, and outcomes. The Tribal HPOG 2.0 [evaluation plan](#) and the Tribal HPOG [literature review](#) are available on the OPRE website. Also available on the OPRE website are three project briefs:

- [An Introduction to the Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG\) 2.0 Program and Evaluation](#)

- [Principles to Guide Research with Tribal Communities: The Tribal HPOG 2.0 Evaluation in Action](#)
- [Implementing Healthcare Career Pathway Training Programs in Rural Settings: Responsive Approaches by Tribal HPOG 2.0 Grantees](#)

In addition, the Tribal evaluation team worked with the grantees to develop [program snapshots](#) highlighting each Tribal HPOG 2.0 program. The briefs feature descriptive results from PAGES as well as qualitative data from the HPOG 2.0 Tribal Evaluation.

- **HPOG University Partnership 2.0 Research Grants (HPOG UP 2.0)** augment OPRE's multi-pronged evaluation strategy for HPOG by funding university research teams that conduct research and evaluation studies that focus on questions relevant to HPOG program goals and objectives and that benefit the broader employment and self-sufficiency research field. The teams partner with HPOG program grantees as an integral part of the research plan development and execution. A [brief](#) provides an overview of the HPOG University Partnership 2.0 Research Grants. The HPOG UP 2.0 grants were awarded in 2016 to the following universities:

ORGANIZATION RECEIVING AWARD	PROJECT TITLE	HPOG PROGRAM PARTNER
Northwestern University, Institute for Policy Research	The Northwestern University Two-Generation Study (NU2Gen) of Parent and Child Human Capital Advancement	Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Inc. (Tulsa, OK)
Brandeis University, Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Heller School for Social Policy and Management	Study of Career Advancement and Quality Jobs in Health Care	The WorkPlace (Bridgeport, CT)
Loyola University of Chicago, School of Social Work	Evaluation of Goal-Directed Psychological Capital and Employer Coaching in Health Profession Opportunity Development	Chicago State University (Chicago, IL)

The HPOG UP 2.0 grants ended in 2020, but two grantees (Northwestern and Loyola) are operating through 2021 under no-cost extensions.

Career Pathways Outcomes Studies

The [Career Pathways Intermediate Outcomes \(CPIO\) Study](#) and the [Career Pathways Long-Term Outcomes \(CPLO\) Study](#) extend the follow-up periods for the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Impact Study, described earlier in this section, and Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) project, described in a text box on the next page. The CPIO and CPLO studies complement and augment the HPOG Impact Study and PACE project,

which examined short-term outcomes from 15 to 24 months after entry into the study.

CPIO, launched in 2014, will examine impacts approximately 36 months after random assignment, while CPLO, launched in 2016, will look at impacts approximately 72 months after random assignment. CPIO and CPLO will use follow-up surveys and administrative data on all participants to examine impacts on educational attainment, employment and earnings, and family well-being

outcomes. Both studies are led by Abt Associates.

Key evaluation questions that will be addressed in these studies include:

1. What are the intermediate and long-term effects of the HPOG 1.0 and PACE programs on their populations of interest?
2. How do effects of career pathways programs vary over time, across outcomes or domains, by occupational sector, by program model, and by participant characteristics?
3. Do different PACE and HPOG models, strategies, or components (e.g., a particular curricular model, such as I-BEST, or particular recruitment strategies or support services) lead to different impacts for participants?

4. How can career pathways models be adjusted to promote intermediate and longer-term outcomes for participants?

In 2017, OPRE released the [analysis plan for the cost-benefit analyses](#) the CPIO team will conduct in up to six of the nine PACE programs. OPRE also released [analysis plans](#) for the PACE intermediate follow-up analyses in 2018 and the HPOG intermediate [follow-up analyses](#) and the [HPOG intermediate impacts report](#) in 2019. Reports on intermediate impacts from three of the nine programs in PACE were released in 2020, and the remaining six reports will be released in 2021. Key findings from four of the programs are highlighted on the next two pages. Reports on long-term outcomes and impacts from HPOG and PACE are expected beginning in 2021.

Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education

In 2007, OPRE initiated the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) project, a multi-site, random assignment evaluation of promising strategies for increasing employment and self-sufficiency among low-income families. The project aimed to study interventions with the potential to have substantial effects on earnings and income rather than just modest effects, prioritize strategies focused on skills development, and concentrate on a relatively wide population of low-income parents. Based on stakeholder input, PACE came to focus on post-secondary career pathways as the main intervention framework to study. The PACE team, led by Abt Associates, conducted implementation and impact evaluations of nine career pathways programs around the country:

The PACE team, led by Abt Associates, conducted implementation and impact evaluations of nine career pathways programs around the country:

- [Des Moines Area Community College's Workforce Training Academy Connect](#)
- [I-BEST Programs in Washington State](#)
- [Instituto del Progreso Latino's Carreras en Salud](#)
- [Madison College's Patient Care Pathway Program](#)
- [Pima Community College's Pathways to Healthcare Program](#)
- [San Diego Workforce Partnership's Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program](#)

- [Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement](#)
- [Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County's Health Careers for All Program](#)
- [Year Up](#)

In 2015, the project released its [evaluation design report](#) and [impact analysis plan](#). The study released implementation and early impact reports in 2017 and 2018 for each of the nine programs and, in 2019, a series of briefs summarizing key findings from those reports. Data collected for PACE is available for [secondary analysis](#) through the Child & Family Data Archive.

Throughout its duration, the project released a number of briefs and short reports on special topics of interest, including:

- A series of briefs based on in-depth interviews with PACE study participants.
- A [brief](#) that highlights the risk factors disadvantaged students face in college success, using data on PACE control group participants.
- A [report](#) that shares the experiences of and lessons learned from Year Up's efforts to scale up their program.
- A [report](#) that shares cross-program implementation and impact findings.
- A [brief](#) that shares reflections from program staff that participated in PACE on their experience participating in a rigorous evaluation.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CAREER PATHWAYS INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES STUDY

San Diego Workforce Partnership's Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program's Three-Year Impacts Report

- *Bridge to Employment increased receipt of postsecondary healthcare credentials and exam-based certifications, but had no detectable impact on average duration of education and training during the first three years after random assignment.* The program increased receipt of postsecondary healthcare credentials from 35 percent in the control group to 51 percent in the treatment group and increased the receipt of exam-based certifications from 36 percent in the control group to 60 percent in the treatment group.
- *Bridge to Employment had no detectable impact on average quarterly earnings in follow-up quarters 12-13, the study's single confirmatory outcome.* It is possible that Bridge to Employment had a meaningful impact on this outcome that the study simply did not detect because the variance in earnings was large and the sample relatively small.
- *Bridge to Employment increased employment in healthcare by 10 percentage points.* The program did not change the overall employment rate, however.
- *On average, the program reduced personal student debt by \$919 and family student debt by \$249.* The program did not, however, have a detectable impact on most other measures of financial well-being.
- *Because of uncertainty in the earnings and educational costs estimates, it is not possible to definitively assess whether the benefits of the Bridge to Employment program are outweighed by the costs.*

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County's Health Careers for All Program's Three-Year Impacts Report

- *Health Careers for All had no detectable impact on average quarterly earnings in follow-up quarters 12 and 13, the study's confirmatory outcome.* During these quarters, the difference in average quarterly earnings between treatment group and control group members was negative (-\$404) but not statistically significantly different from zero.
- *Health Careers for All had a positive impact on receipt of postsecondary healthcare credentials from schools during the first three years, but not on receipt of exam-based certifications and licenses from other authorities such as state boards.* The program increased the receipt of any postsecondary healthcare credential at non-colleges by 15 percentage points.
- *Health Careers for All did not increase the average duration of education and training across all levels of schools during the first three years, but it did increase duration at non-college schools.* There was a small but statistically significant difference in average duration enrolled at non-college schools between the treatment group (0.84 months) and control group (0.34 months).
- *Health Careers for All increased the proportion of treatment group members working in the healthcare field at the end of Year 3 by 6.5 percentage points.* The program did not change the overall employment rate, however.
- *Health Careers for All had no detectable impact at the end of Year 3 on most measures of financial well-being and parenting.* The program did not have a significant effect on health insurance coverage, receipt of means-tested public benefits, personal student debt, or financial distress.

Year Up Three-Year Impacts Report

- *Year Up's large positive earnings impacts persisted undiminished to the end of the five-year follow-up period.* The impact on average quarterly earnings in follow-up Quarters 12 and 13 (this report's confirmatory outcome) was large, at \$1,857, and statistically significant. This impact represents a 38 percent increase over average earnings for the control group (\$4,926). Impacts of about \$2,000 per quarter extended to the end of the five-year follow-up period.
- *The study did not detect an impact on college enrollment after the second follow-up year.* From Year 3 on, college enrollment rates were virtually identical in the treatment and control groups. At the time of the three-year follow-up survey, few members of either group had earned an associate degree or higher, although the fraction was lower for treatment (4 percent) than control (8 percent) group members (statistically significant at $p < .01$).
- *Three-year survey data show signs of impacts in other life domains, but such effects were not widespread.* Findings from the three-year survey show reductions in public benefit receipt, debt, and financial hardship. Average household income did not increase—perhaps because increased earnings both reduced some households' public benefit eligibility and allowed some young adults to live independently. Year Up had a few small effects on living arrangements, but no impacts on several psycho-social outcomes.
- *Despite its high cost, Year Up's benefits to society exceeded its costs.* Results show that Year Up was financially worthwhile for society overall, as well as for participants. The net gain to society was \$15,349 per participant—the difference between a net benefit of \$38,484 and a net cost of \$23,135. These estimated benefits and costs imply that society gained \$1.66 for every \$1.00 spent on Year Up.

Pima Community College's Pathways to Healthcare Program's Three-Year Impacts Report

- *Pathways to Healthcare increased the receipt of post-secondary credentials taking a year or more of college to earn—one of the two confirmatory outcomes in this report—from 11 percent to 18 percent.* The program increased receipt of college credentials taking less than a year from 6 to 26 percent, a noticeably larger impact.
- *The program had no detectable impact on average quarterly earnings in follow-up quarters 12 and 13, the second of two confirmatory outcomes in this report.* Treatment and control group members both earned about \$4,000 per quarter in quarters 12 and 13 after random assignment. There was no evidence of positive impacts on earnings through quarter 18.
- *Pathways to Healthcare had no detectable impact on employment overall as of three years after random assignment, but increased employment in the healthcare field.* Slightly less than two thirds of both the treatment and control groups reported being employed as of the follow-up survey. About 40 percent of the treatment group self-reported employment in the healthcare field, an increase of 5 percentage points over the control group.

Career Pathways Secondary Data Analysis Grants

In December 2019, OPRE awarded four grants to support secondary analysis of data collected for the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) project and the evaluations of the first round of grants under the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program. The

purpose of the Career Pathways Secondary Data Analysis Grants is to stimulate and fund secondary analysis of data collected through the PACE, HPOG Impact Study, and HPOG NIE evaluations (each discussed earlier in this section) on questions relevant to career pathways programs' goals and objectives. The grants are an integral component of OPRE's multi-pronged career pathways portfolio. Grants were awarded to the following institutions:

ORGANIZATION RECEIVING AWARD	PROJECT TITLE
Brandeis University, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Institute on Assets and Social Policy	Analysis and Measurement of Career Pathways and Progress through Job Quality and Micro-Advancements
Harvard University	Determinants of an Effective Job Training Program: An Analysis of Year Up
MDRC	Leveraging Data to Understand Career Pathways
University of Texas at Austin, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources	Which Program Characteristics are linked to Certified Nursing Assistant Training Participants Educational Outcomes? Lessons from the HPOG 1.0 Evaluation

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

A growing body of research demonstrates that all humans have limited attention, imperfect self-control, and finite cognitive resources, and that public policies can be more effective when they acknowledge and account for these realities of human capacity and behavior. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that coping with the stress of poverty and economic insecurity can place a high demand on cognitive resources, making attention to the realities of human capacity and behavior particularly important when designing programs and policies for low-income populations. Insights from psychology, neuroscience, and other social and behavioral sciences can provide tools to help the design of programs reflect the reality of how people actually make decisions and behave. OPRE is building a portfolio of projects focused on learning and applying insights from social and behavioral sciences.

In 2010, OPRE launched the [Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency \(BIAS\) project](#), the first major opportunity to apply behavioral science insights to programs serving low-income and vulnerable families in the United States. In 2015, OPRE launched [BIAS Capstone](#) and [BIAS Next Generation](#) to synthesize, disseminate, and build on BIAS's applied behavioral science work. Most recently, OPRE created the [Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants](#) to support dissertation research that will add to the growing body of knowledge on effective behavioral interventions for ACF programs and populations.

Additionally, OPRE's [Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency](#) project explored how psychological processes associated with goal-oriented skills (such as goal-setting, self-regulation, planning, and problem-solving) can usefully be incorporated into programs aimed at improving job entry, retention, and advancement. OPRE's [Employment Coaching for TANF and Related Populations](#), featured in the section on Employment and the Labor Market, also draws on behavioral insights.

Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Next Generation

Many human services programs are designed such that individuals must make active decisions and undertake a series of complex steps in order to benefit from them—choosing which programs to apply for; completing forms; attending multiple, in-person meetings; showing proof of eligibility; and arranging travel and child care. Program designers often implicitly assume that individuals will

carefully consider options and make decisions that maximize their well-being and that their behavior will reflect these informed decisions. Over the past several decades, however, innovative research in the area of behavioral economics has shown that human decision-making is often imperfect and imprecise. People – clients and program administrators alike – procrastinate, get overwhelmed by choices, and miss important details. As a result, both programs and participants may not always achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Insights from behavioral economics, which combines findings from psychology and economics, suggest that a deeper understanding of decision-making and behavior could improve human services program design and outcomes. Principles from behavioral economics can both shed light on decision-making and offer new tools to improve outcomes for program participants. Small changes in the environment can facilitate desired behaviors; planning and commitment devices can be used to improve follow-through; and default rules can produce positive outcomes even for people who fail to act.

OPRE's [Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency \(BIAS\) project](#) was the first major opportunity to apply a behavioral economics lens to programs that serve low-income and vulnerable families in the United States. The project demonstrated that applying behavioral insights to challenges facing human services programs can improve program operations and outcomes. While the effects of interventions tested in BIAS were typically modest, they were consistently achieved and meaningful due to their scalability and low cost. In 2015, OPRE launched the BIAS Next Generation (BIAS NG) project to build on the successes of BIAS and continue exploring the application of behavioral science to the programs and target populations of ACF. This next-generation project, led by MDRC in collaboration with Larry Katz of Harvard University, Marianne Bertrand of the University of Chicago, Judd Kessler of the University of Pennsylvania, MEF Associates, Child Trends, and Public Strategies, is building on the activities and lessons of BIAS while also going beyond the work of BIAS in several ways including:

- Working with additional ACF programs, specifically TANF, child welfare, and Head Start programs;
- Testing additional types of interventions, including [going beyond “nudges”](#) and considering changes to program structures and choice architectures; and

- Collecting additional information about the interventions, including conducting implementation research to better understand how and why the interventions do or do not work.

For each program area, the BIAS NG team consulted with stakeholders about the major challenges facing these programs. To improve client participation in TANF activities, the project is collaborating with programs in Los Angeles County (California), Monroe County (New York), and Washington State to test text messages, mailed reminders, and new staff practices. To increase families' engagement in their child welfare cases, the project is working with Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) to test a mailed flyer providing a roadmap of key steps in their case coupled with reinforcing text messages. Additionally, to help guide qualified families through the application process to foster or adopt, the team is developing tools in partnership with Los Angeles County. In Head Start, BIAS NG is collaborating with two Wayne County (Michigan) grantees – Starfish Family Services and Matrix Human Services – on behavioral diagnosis and design activities to devise new behavioral interventions. In 2020, the project completed random assignment in three sites and will begin reporting on the results of those tests in 2021.

In April 2020, BIAS NG released an [edition](#) of the project's Behavioral Buzz newsletter on evidence-based behavioral science practices that social services agencies could consider adopting in order to reduce burden for clients and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants

The Behavioral Interventions Scholars (BIS) grant program was launched in 2017 to support dissertation research by advanced graduate students who are applying a behavioral science lens to specific research questions relevant to social services programs and policies and other issues facing low-income and vulnerable families in the United States. In line with OPRE's Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency portfolio of projects, these grants are intended to facilitate the completion of high-quality research projects that will add to the growing body of knowledge on effective behavioral interventions for ACF programs and populations. BIS also aims to build capacity in the research field to use behavioral science approaches in this area and to foster mentoring relationships between high-quality doctoral students and faculty members. The current BIS grant recipients and their projects are:

GRADUATE STUDENT	PROJECT TITLE	UNIVERSITY	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/ FACULTY MENTOR
Anne Byrne	Behavioral Effects of Sliding Scale Mechanisms on Participation in Assistance Programs	Cornell University	Dr. David Just
Emily Hanno	A Novel Approach to Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators and Caregivers	Harvard University	Dr. Stephanie Jones
S. Gabe Hatch	Optimizing Amount and Type of Practitioner Nudges in Online Relationship Education for Low-Income Couples	University of Miami	Dr. Brian Doss
Weston Merrick	Using Behavioral and Design Science to Reduce Administrative Burdens: Evidence from Minneapolis Public Housing	University of Minnesota	Dr. Jodi Sandfort
Pierre-Luc Vautrey	Mindfulness and Behavioral Economics: Evaluating the Effects of Meditation on Wellbeing and Decision-Making	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Dr. Frank Schilbach
Danke Derek Wu	The Effects of Automating Welfare Services on Program Enrollment and Well-Being: Evidence from Indiana	University of Chicago	Dr. Bruce Meyer

Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency

ACF launched the Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency (GOALS) project in 2014 to investigate the extent to which psychology-informed frameworks can be incorporated into programs aimed at improving job entry, retention, and advancement.

The project, conducted by Mathematica, reflected the confluence of several lines of research suggesting that adults who engaged in goal-directed activities were more likely to be productive and successful both in the workplace and at home. Emerging research by psychologists and neuroscientists also suggests that self-regulation skills such as executive functioning, metacognition, motivation, and other cognitive and emotional skills are critical for goal achievement. In addition, research suggests that exposure to poverty, chronic stress, lack of in-demand skills, and parenting responsibilities may challenge an individual's ability to operationalize self-regulation skills that support goal-directed behaviors and advance self-sufficiency. While there has been substantial research in the early childhood field on the impact of exposure to adverse experiences, there has been less work focused on psychological processes that could support adults and young adults in overcoming similar contextual challenges.

The GOALS project aimed to improve understanding of relevant self-regulation skills associated with goal-directed behaviors both by synthesizing existing research and by undertaking fieldwork to learn about adult workforce development programs that are currently integrating these frameworks. In 2017, GOALS released a [synthesis report](#). The report summarizes existing research about the underlying skills relevant for goal-directed behaviors and goal achievement in workforce programs and promising strategies and interventions for strengthening these skills. Also in 2017, the project produced a [conceptual framework](#) that describes the relationship between self-regulation skills, the goal achievement process, personal goal attainment, and employment and self-sufficiency outcomes. The conceptual framework describes approaches and strategies for strengthening goal-directed behaviors among low-income adults in workforce development programs.

The project has published the following briefs:

1. [New Perspectives on Practice: A Guide to Measuring Self-Regulation and Goal-Related Outcomes in Employment Programs](#) provides guidance on how employment and human services programs can measure self-regulation and goal achievement and describes considerations for selecting measures and deciding when and with whom they might be used.

2. [Using Psychology-Informed Strategies to Promote Self-Sufficiency: A Review of Innovative Programs](#) illustrates how some programs for low-income adults are attempting to strengthen participants' self-regulation skills or make it easier for them to use existing skills. The brief includes profiles of five programs, which are intended to help practitioners understand how research-informed practices are currently being implemented in a range of contexts and incorporated into existing interventions.
3. [Using The Science About Self-Regulation To Improve Economic Outcomes For TANF Families](#) articulates a vision for TANF programs that is informed by the science about self-regulation and goal achievement. It emphasizes three principles for helping TANF recipients use self-regulation strategies to improve economic outcomes for children and families: 1) reduce sources of stress; 2) strengthen core life skills (for example, planning, monitoring, and exercising self-control); and 3) support responsive relationships.
4. [Improving Employment Outcomes: Using Innovative Goal-Oriented Strategies in TANF Programs](#) describes the efforts of four TANF programs to implement three new interventions that are informed by evidence on self-regulation and designed to help participants reach their personal and job-related goals.
5. [Supporting Employees and Maximizing Profit: The Case for Workforce Development Focused on Self-Regulation](#) presents evidence for developing the self-regulation skills of low-wage workers in order to improve their outcomes and employers' profitability.

GOALS concluded in 2019 following publication of a [summary report](#).

CROSS-CUTTING AND OTHER SAFETY NET RESEARCH

In addition to research that falls clearly within the substantive areas of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Employment and the Labor Market, Education and Training, and Behavioral Science, OPRE's family self-sufficiency research portfolio includes several projects that span these issues in a cross-cutting way.

Assets for Independence Evaluation

From 1998 until 2017, ACF operated the Assets for Independence (AFI) program, a demonstration program that supported an assets-based approach for increasing the economic self-sufficiency of individuals and families with low incomes through Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). From 2011 to 2020, ACF conducted the first-ever random assignment evaluation of the AFI IDA program to examine the short- and medium-term impact of participation in the AFI program.

The evaluation, led by Urban Institute and its partners, MEF Associates and RTI International, included two AFI grantees: Prosperity Works in New Mexico and RISE Financial Pathways in Los Angeles, CA. The evaluation surveyed participants at approximately one and three years after random assignment to provide important information on the early and intermediate impacts of AFI participation. The [early impact report](#) was released in 2016, and [a final report summarizing intermediate impact findings](#) was published in 2019. The project also produced a [synthesis brief](#) in 2020, which synthesized findings across the two AFI grantee sites in the evaluation and placed the findings in the context of the AFI program and other asset-building programs.

Building Evaluative Capacity Through a Focus on Key Components of the Community Services Block Grant/Community Action Agency Model

The mission of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is to provide assistance to states and local communities, working through a network of Community Action Agencies (CAA) and other neighborhood-based organizations, for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient. CSBG is administered by the Office of Community Services (OCS) at ACF. Beginning in FY 2012, OCS initiated

efforts to increase performance and improve outcomes at all levels of the CSBG network. Specifically, OCS has worked to develop reporting systems that better integrate information from the local level on the people served, services provided, strategies used, and outcomes achieved.

Building on these efforts, this project honed in on the special challenges the CSBG network faces in assessing the outcomes of its community-level initiatives. Developing more robust tools to assess the impacts of initiatives that attempt to affect change at the community level is a long-standing challenge for the evaluation community, in general, but it has a particular significance for members of the CSBG network for whom community-level change is a core aspect of their mission. To help CSBG-eligible entities tell an effective and accurate “causal story” about their community-level change work, this project identified promising practices to assessing effectiveness in relation to community-level change efforts. To identify these promising practices, the project:

- Consulted with experts;
- Conducted an internal analysis of data states report to the federal government as part of their required reporting about CSBG-funded activities; and
- Undertook a review of existing literature.

The result of this project will be a summary of the literature review, which will be published in early 2021 and will explore lessons from both the literature on measuring community-level change and the literature on evaluating specific community-level initiatives. In summarizing these lessons, the literature review looks to how these might apply in the CSBG context. The literature review also includes an appendix of case studies highlighting the approaches taken to evaluating a set of well-known, community-level change efforts.

Conducted by Urban Institute, the project launched in 2016 and concluded in 2019; the literature review was published in 2020.

Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program

Established by ACF's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in 1980, the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program serves refugees and other eligible youth within the United States who do not have a parent or relative available and committed to providing for their long-term care. The URM Program provides services within or parallel to the domestic child welfare system, including placements, independent living services, educational assistance, and other services to promote youth well-being through local URM provider agencies. While past research has examined programs and outcomes for youth aging out of domestic foster care, these studies have not focused specifically on the URM Program and its participants.

In 2017, OPRE launched the Descriptive Study of the URM Program with the goal of improving the field's understanding of the range of child welfare services and benefits provided through the URM Program and the experiences of participants. Led by MEF Associates and its partner Child Trends, in coordination with ORR, the study includes analysis of URM Program administrative data, surveys of state administrators and URM service providers, and site visits to six URM service providers.

OPRE, ORR, and the project team worked together to select URM service providers for site visits across six different states, representing a diverse range of program ages, program sizes, geographic contexts, policy and program environments, and mixes of URM youth from around the world. During the site visits, the study team interviewed program managers, staff, and community partners, and conducted focus groups with URM youth and foster parents. Additionally, the study team surveyed local administrators of the URM Program, as well as state-level coordinators of refugee resettlement services. Also, the study team analyzed administrative data on URM youth's placements, services received, and well-being.

In 2020, the study completed data collection and began synthesizing findings. Findings from these analyses will be available in 2021.

How TANF Agencies Support Families Experiencing Homelessness

In 2013, ACF's Office of Family Assistance released an Information Memorandum on the "Use of TANF Funds to Serve Homeless Families and Families at Risk of Experiencing Homelessness," which clarifies how TANF funds can be used to help address the housing and other needs

of families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It encourages TANF agencies to consider using TANF funds to address housing needs; coordinate services for TANF-eligible homeless families; provide employment services to TANF-eligible homeless individuals; and serve as partners in statewide, regional, and local homeless efforts, such as Continuums of Care.

ACF is interested in learning about the extent to which states, counties, and local agencies are explicitly using TANF funds to serve families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and what they are specifically doing with TANF funds to support and serve these families. This project will include a scan of state policies (including an agency survey and document review), site visits, TANF agency and partner organization staff interviews, and focus groups with adult TANF recipients.

The project launched in 2017 and is being conducted by Abt Associates in partnership with MEF Associates. In the first two years of the project, the study team conducted a preliminary site visit to pilot test the interview instruments and administered a web survey to 54 state and territory TANF administrators and 150 county or local level administrators. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, site visits took place virtually in fall 2020. The project will produce a final report, along with three special topics briefs, including one that summarizes the scan analysis.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services Analysis Execution

This project builds on OPRE's [Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services \(RED\)](#) project, which concluded in 2017. RED helped build a base of knowledge to inform ACF's identification and understanding of ethnic and racial differences across the service spectrum—more specifically, in access to and take-up of human services, nature and quality of services received, and outcomes of services. The goal was to examine how greater insight into racial and ethnic disparities could be used to improve human services program delivery for ACF. To help achieve this goal, RED created a research plan to reliably identify racial and ethnic disparities across the service delivery system in a range of ACF programs and services. The plan outlines research questions and proposes approaches to addressing those questions, including recommended data sources, analytic strategies, and data collection activities.

This new project, Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services Analysis Execution (RED-X), will implement RED's research plan in relation to TANF and to Child Care Development Fund-administered child care subsidies. Addressing the research questions and implementing the analyses and activities outlined in RED's plan will allow

ACF to identify whether disparities exist in these programs, the magnitude of any disparities, and how these disparities may vary across the two programs. The goal of this new work is to improve ACF's human services program delivery by identifying opportunities to reduce any racial and ethnic disparities in access, treatment, or outcomes.

The project launched in 2018 and is conducted by Urban Institute and its partner NORC at the University of Chicago.

Human-Centered Design for Human Services

In 2018, OPRE launched the Human-Centered Design for Human Services (HCD4HS) project, led by Child Trends, with partners MEF Associates and design firm Anthro-Tech, Inc. Human-centered design (HCD) aims to create solutions to complex problems through intentional engagement with the beneficiaries of the solution. The purpose of this project is to gain a better understanding of what HCD looks like in the context of human services; the requirements for implementation across a range of programs; and the evaluability, feasibility, and sustainability of HCD as an organizational practice. HCD will be explored across ACF programs at federal, state, and local levels.

Work under this project began with an assessment of the state of the field through expert and stakeholder consultation, a review of literature, and key informant interviews. These activities aimed to define core elements of HCD; identify human services programs that have implemented HCD; and to identify evaluation efforts to date. Key informants were interviewed from the following three organizations: Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit in Milton, Pennsylvania; Multnomah Idea Lab within the Multnomah County Department of Human Services in Oregon; and the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood. A synthesis of the findings across these foundational activities is forthcoming.

Building on what was learned from these early activities, the HCD4HS project is now conducting a pilot demonstration study and implementation evaluation in partnership with three human services sites. The pilot study will provide training in HCD and assess the implementation, feasibility, evaluability, and outcomes of interest to ACF programs.

Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches

This project builds on OPRE's [Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security](#) project, which concluded in 2018. That project investigated the design and evaluability of

integrated approaches to alleviating poverty that address the needs of both parents and children. A national scan found that most existing two-generation programs were in the early stages of development as pilots or as new programs that began only a few years prior and were not ready for evaluations of effectiveness. The scan also revealed that the majority of programs lacked the internal research capacity to conduct and manage research evaluations for themselves, and they rarely had partnerships with local evaluators to help them achieve this goal.

Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches aims to build on the gaps in research and practice highlighted in the Integrated Approaches project. Specific objectives include:

1. Conducting formative research to better understand program implementation, strengthen promising programs, and prepare them for evaluations of effectiveness;
2. Building the capacity of programs and researchers to conduct rigorous and meaningful evaluations of integrated approaches to supporting child development and improving family economic security; and
3. Addressing measurement issues in order to promote learning across evaluations and a better understanding of relevant processes and outcomes of two-generation programs for low-income children and their parents.

The project launched in 2019 and is led by Mathematica. Through stakeholder and expert engagement activities during FY 2020, five programs delivering two-generation services to support child development and family economic security were identified and selected to participate in formative research activities, in line with objective 1 above. Over the course of the next three years, programs will receive technical assistance to implement the Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI²) framework, which is a research-based approach to program improvement that embeds analytic methods in the process of designing, implementing, and iteratively testing program changes.

Understanding Financial Literacy Interventions in Employment-Related Contexts for Low-Income Individuals

Very little empirical or exploratory work currently exists on the nexus between financial literacy and employment and training programs designed for adults, as previous research has typically focused on other contexts and/or populations. This project seeks to fill that gap in the research and develop a better understanding of how financial capability interventions reach and affect low-income populations through employment and training programs.

OPRE Methods Inquiries

The Methods Inquiries project helps ensure that OPRE-funded research uses the most scientifically advanced and appropriately applied methods possible. To accomplish this goal, OPRE regularly convenes meetings of scientists and research experts to advance its understanding of critical topics in social science research methodology. In addition to OPRE staff, these meetings include participants from a variety of contexts including academia, government, and the private sector. The meetings explore innovations in research design, analytic techniques, and measurement. Additionally, the Methods Inquiries project includes an ongoing seminar series; publications with further information on topics addressed in the meetings; and ad hoc responses to emerging methodological issues.

To date, OPRE has sponsored 11 meetings on innovative methods. The most recent meeting, held in October 2020, was entitled “Exploring Core Components Research in Social Services Settings.” Prior meetings explored effect size; sub-group analysis; implementation science; innovative directions in estimating impact; methods for unpacking the “black box” of programs and policies; use of administrative data in social policy research; alternatives to randomized controlled trials; Bayesian methods; rapid learning methods; and open science. These meetings are intended to help OPRE explore recent methodological advances, gaps in current knowledge and implementation, and opportunities to apply innovative methods to government-funded research and evaluation.

In 2020, OPRE released a brief on the topic of the 2019 meeting, [Methods for Promoting Open Science in Social Policy Research](#). The brief provides an orientation to the topic of open science, including definitions of key terms; themes and questions raised during the meeting; and steps that federal agencies can take to promote open science in social policy research. A list of resources for further reading is available, and a video recording of the 2019 meeting session on study pre-registration is forthcoming. Previously, OPRE released a series of resources following the 2018 meeting on rapid learning methods including [Understanding Rapid Learning Methods: Frequently Asked Questions and Recommended Resources](#).

Materials from all of OPRE’s past methods meetings, including agendas, presentations, and publications, are available at www.opremethodsmeeting.org.

In 2019, OPRE launched a descriptive study to explore financial capability interventions within employment-related contexts for low-income adults. The purpose of this project is to better understand the extent to which employment and training programs incorporate financial literacy training, how such training is incorporated, and options for future research and evaluation efforts in this area. This project will include:

- Expert consultations;
- A review of the existing literature on the effects of financial capability interventions on economic and employment outcomes among human services and employment program participants;
- A survey of employment and training programs; and
- Special topics briefs on various matters concerning financial capability interventions in employment-related contexts for low-income individuals, including the impacts of incremental versus one-time Earned Income Tax Credit payments on family economic stability.

The study is led by MEF Associates and its partner Urban Institute.

Human Services Programs in Rural Contexts

Though significant evaluative work has been carried out to improve our understanding of how human services programs meet their goals of improving family economic self-sufficiency, financial security, and overall well-being, there are gaps in knowledge of how programs can best serve rural communities. Rural contexts present unique opportunities and challenges for administering human services programs. Through the Human Services Programs in Rural Contexts project, ACF seeks to better understand these contexts for several programs: Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood; TANF; Health Profession Opportunity Grants; and Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting.

The types of challenges human services programs experience in rural communities translate into a series of more specific challenges for leveraging the four ACF programs that are the focus of this study. While rural communities often have many assets, they can struggle with access to economic opportunity, transportation, broadband internet, and health services. Distance to services and negative cultural perceptions of public assistance also present barriers to accessing human services and other benefits for which families may be eligible. Disparities in populations’ access to services and benefits can lead to people’s basic needs going unmet.

Given these key challenges, this study will focus on the following goals:

1. Provide a rich description of human services programs in rural contexts
2. Determine the unmet need for human services in rural communities

3. Identify opportunities for strengthening the capacity of human services programs to promote the economic and social well-being of individuals, families, and communities in rural contexts

2M Research and its partner Urban Institute are conducting this study.

National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families

The [National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families](#), supported by an OPRE grant, generates new research and translates research across three priority areas—poverty reduction and self-sufficiency, healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood, and early care and education—to build knowledge and inform ACF programs and policies in order to better serve Hispanic children and families. The Center has three primary goals: 1) advance a cutting-edge research agenda; 2) build research capacity; and 3) translate emerging research concerning low-income Hispanic children and families in the United States. The Center is led by Child Trends, in partnership with Duke University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and University of Maryland, College Park. Over the past year, the Center released numerous [publications, data tools, webinars, and trainings](#) examining various topics concerning low-income Hispanics in the United States.

Examples of their work from the past year includes:

- [Work Hours, Family Composition, and Employment Predict Use of Child Care for Low-Income Latino Infants and Toddlers](#)
- [The majority of low-income Hispanic and Black households have little-to-no bank access, complicating access to COVID relief funds](#)
- [Resident Hispanic Fathers Report Frequent Involvement in the Lives of Their Children](#)
- [Multiple Factors Predict Higher Child Care Costs for Low-Income Hispanic Households](#)
- [The Rate of Children without Health Insurance Is Rising, Particularly among Latino Children of Immigrant Parents and White Children](#)
- [Reimagining Service Delivery for Hispanic Families during COVID-19](#)

- [State-level TANF Policies and Practice May Shape Access and Utilization among Hispanic Families](#)

Key findings from these publications include:

- The majority (60%) of Hispanic and Black low-income family households had no or limited access to banks, according to analysis of data from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. In 2017, 30 percent of low-income Hispanic and Black family households (defined here as households including two or more related people with a total income up to \$30,000) did not have a bank account, compared with 11 percent of low-income White family households.
- Analysis of the 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education suggest that the use of nonparental care for infants and toddlers in low-income Hispanic households depends largely on whether the child lives in a single- or two-parent household, how many parents are employed, and the number of hours parents work.
- While low-income Latino families with infants and toddlers report similar reasons to their peers for using child care—mainly, to support their work or their children’s development—they report searching differently for child care relative to other racial/ethnic groups. For example, low-income Hispanic families with children under age 5 consider fewer ECE providers during their search for child care than their low-income Black and White counterparts.
- Rates of children without health insurance in the United States declined steadily between 2010 and 2016 across all racial/ethnic groups. Beginning in 2016, the uninsured rate among children rose by more than half a percentage point, resulting in roughly 515,000 more children who were uninsured in 2018 than in 2016. This uptick was limited to Hispanic children with only foreign-born parents and non-Hispanic White children.

Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network

The second cohort of the Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network (FSSRN) cooperative

agreements were awarded in January 2020. These five-year cooperative agreements support five university researchers to work independently and collectively on systematic, multi-disciplinary examinations of current gaps in family self-sufficiency and stability research.

The scholars are:

- Yu-Ling Chang, University of California at Berkeley
- Anna Gassman-Pines, Duke University
- Andrea Hetling, Rutgers University
- Kristina Nikolova, Wayne State University
- David Rothwell, Oregon State University

The FSSRN promotes productive partnerships between the scholars and state or local human services agencies and scholars' participation in a multidisciplinary learning community with other members of the Network.

NEW

Understanding the Value of Centralized Services

In order to gain access to the social services for which they are eligible, individuals and families with low incomes in the United States often must navigate a complex network of support. Providers that serve the same clients may be

geographically dispersed, and the level of communication and coordination among them varies. In addition, the programs they operate may have different eligibility criteria, application processes, and participation requirements. However, in some communities, providers have worked together to bring important services under one roof.

The Understanding the Value of Centralized Services (VOCS) project, awarded to MEF Associates and its subcontractor Mathematica in 2020, seeks to build knowledge on the costs and benefits of co-locating social services for families with low incomes. VOCS will summarize the findings from existing research on this topic. Building on this knowledge base, VOCS will identify approximately three state and local social services providers or networks of providers that have undertaken efforts to centralize and coordinate services and, using qualitative methods, will document client and staff experiences receiving and providing services at these sites. A final report, expected in late 2022, will synthesize findings from the literature review and descriptive studies.

Baby's First Years

Baby's First Years, launched in 2017, is a multi-site randomized controlled trial supported by a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) within the National Institutes of Health, along with other public and private funders. This study seeks to fill important gaps in scientific knowledge about the role of economic resources in children's early development by evaluating whether unconditional cash payments have a causal effect on the cognitive, socio-emotional, and brain development of infants and toddlers in low-income U.S. families. Specifically, 1,000 mothers of infants with incomes below the federal poverty line have been recruited into the study and are receiving monthly cash payments by debit card for the first 40 months of the child's life. Parents in the experimental group are receiving \$333 per month (\$4,000 per year), whereas parents in the control group are receiving a nominal monthly payment of \$20. Mothers were recruited in New York City, greater New Orleans, the Twin Cities, and the Omaha metropolitan area.

In order to understand the impacts of the added income on children's cognitive and behavioral development, an interdisciplinary study team will assess treatment/control group differences at age 3 (and, for a subset of measures, age 2) on measures of cognitive, language, memory, self-regulation, and socio-emotional development. Because brain circuitry may

be sensitive to the effects of early experience even before early behavioral differences can be detected, the study team will also assess treatment/control group differences in measures of brain activity. To understand how family economic behavior, parenting, and parent stress and well-being change in response to income enhancement, the study team will assess treatment/control differences in family expenditures, food insecurity, housing, and neighborhood quality; family routines and time use; parent stress, mental health, and cognition; parenting practices; and child care arrangements at child age 2 and, for a subset of these measures, child age 1.

Since 2019, OPRE has contributed funds to the NICHD grant to enable a qualitative examination of how the cash income affects families' lives. Because the meaning mothers attach to the income is important to how they will use it and the impacts it will have on families, the study team will conduct four waves of qualitative interviews with a subset of mothers in the Twin Cities and greater New Orleans over the course of the study to ask about their views and experiences of the transfer. Together, these analyses will provide the first definitive understanding of the extent to which income plays a causal role in determining early child cognitive, socio-emotional, and brain development among low-income families.

ACF Evidence Capacity Support

OPRE and program offices at ACF are partnering to extend and deepen evidence capacity. Evidence capacity refers to a culture of and infrastructure for building and using evidence for learning and improvement. Launched in 2020, the project builds on OPRE's existing efforts to augment evidence capacity at ACF and incorporates the principles of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018. It prioritizes the learning needs of agency staff and stakeholders for information about the context, reach, implementation, performance, and impact of their

programs. The project aims to strengthen the capacity for using evidence in five areas: 1) evidence culture, 2) evidence infrastructure, 3) data access, 4) knowledge and skills, and 5) dissemination.

The needs of participating program offices will drive the activities completed under this contract, in partnership with OPRE and the contractors Mathematica and Child Trends. Potential activities may include conducting needs assessments to inform learning agendas and supporting program offices in using data to answer their high-priority questions.

SPOTLIGHT ON DISSEMINATION

OPRE continually strives to produce high-quality, rigorous research and ensure that it is accessible and relevant to those interested in deepening their understanding of this work. Whether communicating with researchers, practitioners, program providers, policymakers, or the public, OPRE understands that program and policy research does not exist in a vacuum and is part of a cycle of communication across multiple dissemination channels. OPRE has a robust dissemination function that includes the [OPRE website](#), the [OPRE News](#) newsletter, and social media presence on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). OPRE also hosts conferences to share research findings with researchers and with program administrators and policymakers at all levels.

Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency

Since 1998, OPRE has convened the Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS) for researchers, state and local administrators, practitioners, and federal officials and policymakers to discuss cutting-edge research from evaluations of programs, policies, and services that support low-income and vulnerable families on the path to economic self-sufficiency. The biennial conference serves as an opportunity to present the latest findings from evaluations of human services programs and policies; discuss ways to incorporate findings into the design, implementation, and improvement of programs; and develop strategies for future evaluations. In addition, the conference provides an opportunity for emerging scholars who are early in their research careers to showcase their work. Conference topics include:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs, Policies, and Populations
- Employment and Mobility in the Labor Market
- Youth Well-Being and the Transition to Adulthood
- Strengthening Families, Fatherhood, Marriages, and Relationships
- Evaluating Social Programs, Building Evidence, and Using Data
- Approaches to Alleviate Poverty and Expand Opportunity

The 2020 RECS was held October 13-15 and 19-22 in a virtual format. The conference had over 1,700 participants, included 45 plenary and breakout sessions and 11 networking roundtables, and featured the work of 19 emerging scholars. The next RECS will be held in 2022. For more information on past and future conferences, visit recsconference.net.

OPRE WELFARE AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PUBLICATIONS – FY 2020

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) RESEARCH

State TANF Policies Database

- [*Graphical Overview of State TANF Policies as of July 2018*](#)

Understanding Poverty: Childhood and Family Experiences and TANF Office Culture

- [*Practicing Positive Organizational Culture in TANF Offices*](#)

EMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOR MARKET

Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration

- [*The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Cost Analysis of the STEP Forward Program*](#)
- [*The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Cost Analysis of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration*](#)
- [*Can Subsidized Employment Programs Help Disadvantaged Job Seekers? A Synthesis of Findings from Evaluations of 13 Programs*](#)
- [*A More Generous Earned Income Tax Credit for Singles: Interim Findings from the Paycheck Plus Demonstration in Atlanta*](#)

Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation

- [*Implementation and Impact of a Goal-Oriented Coaching Program for Cash Assistance Recipients in Michigan*](#)
- [*The Effectiveness of Different Approaches for Moving Cash Assistance Recipients to Work: Findings from the Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation*](#)

Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families Project (BEES)

- [*Site Profile – Breaking Barriers, San Diego County, CA*](#)
- [*BEES Podcast: Testing a Successful Employment Model in a New Context*](#)
- [*BEES Podcast: Testing a Successful Employment Model in a New Context Transcript*](#)

Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse

- [*Protocol for the Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse: Methods and Standards*](#)

Next Steps for Employment and Training Research: Roundtable and White Papers

- [*Employment and Training Programs Serving Low-Income Populations: Next Steps for Research*](#)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Evaluation Portfolio

- [*Implementing Healthcare Career Pathway Training Programs in Rural Settings: Responsive Approaches by Tribal HPOG 2.0 Grantees*](#)
- [*National and Tribal Evaluation of the 2nd Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG 2.0\): Analysis Plan for the HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation Short-Term Impact Report*](#)
- [*Analysis Plan for Cost-Benefit Analysis: National Evaluation of the Second Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG 2.0\)*](#)
- [*National and Tribal Evaluation of the 2nd Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG 2.0\): Descriptive Evaluation Analysis Plan for the National Evaluation*](#)
- [*Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants 2.0 Snapshots*](#)
- [*Health Profession Opportunity Grants 2.0: Year Four Annual Report \(2018–19\)*](#)

Career Pathways Intermediate Outcomes Study

- [Health Profession Opportunity Grants \(HPOG 1.0\) Impact Study: Three-Year Impacts Report](#)
- [Pima Community College's Pathways to Healthcare Program: Three-Year Impact Report](#)
- [The San Diego Workforce Partnership's Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program: Three-Year Impact Report](#)

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants

- [Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants Summary Chart – FY19](#)
- [Behavioral Interventions Scholars: 2019 Grantee Project Abstracts](#)

CROSS-CUTTING AND OTHER SAFETY NET RESEARCH

Assets for Independence Evaluation

- [From Savings to Ownership: Third-Year Impacts from the Assets for Independence Program Randomized Evaluation](#)
- [Building Savings, Ownership, and Financial Well-Being: First- and Third-Year Assets for Independence Program Randomized Evaluation Findings in Context](#)

Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network

- [2020-2025 Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network \(FSSRN\) Grantees](#)

Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches

- [Call for Input on Existing Measures of Mutual Reinforcement](#)

OPRE Methods Inquiries

- [Rapid Learning: Methods to Examine and Improve Social Programs](#)
- [Understanding Rapid Learning Methods: Frequently Asked Questions and Recommended Resources](#)
- [Methods for Promoting Open Science in Social Policy Research](#)
- [OPRE 2019 Methods Meeting Resources List](#)

National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families

- [Child Care Affordability Is Out of Reach for Many Low-Income Hispanic Households](#)
- [How States with Large Hispanic Populations Are Using or Plan to Use Additional Federal Funding for Child Care](#)
- [Multiple Factors Predict Higher Child Care Costs for Low-Income Hispanic Households](#)
- [The majority of low-income Hispanic and Black households have little-to-no bank access, complicating access to COVID relief funds](#)
- [Resident Hispanic Fathers Report Frequent Involvement in the Lives of Their Children](#)
- [Work Hours, Family Composition, and Employment Predict Use of Child Care for Low-Income Latino Infants and Toddlers](#)
- [The Rate of Children Without Health Insurance Is Rising, Particularly among Latino Children of Immigrant Parents and White Children](#)
- [Making Service Delivery Relevant for Latino Families during COVID-19 through Responsive Adaptation](#)

